

St Michaels Playgroup

Margaret Wix Junior & Infant School, High Oaks, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 6EL



Inspection date

16 June 2017

Previous inspection date

27 June 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The manager and staff are dedicated and enthusiastic about their roles. The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Staff interact well with the children, supporting and promoting their communication and language skills.
- Partnership working with other professionals is effective and results in very good support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children are well prepared for their move to school. They become familiar with the school environment as they visit regularly and are invited to attend school functions.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported. For example, staff use Makaton sign language to support their developing vocabulary.
- The playgroup is well established within the community. Parents speak very positively about the care and education their children receive.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The manager does not make best possible use of staff supervision meetings, in order to identify ways to build on their already good practice.
- Staff do not consistently use the information they gain from parents and their initial assessments of children to precisely target their starting points when they first start.
- Parents are not provided with enough information about how they can help to support their child's learning at home.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- strengthen the existing arrangements for staff supervision, in order to raise the quality of teaching to an even higher level
- use the information from parents and initial assessments of children when they first start to track their starting points more accurately
- provide parents with information about how they can support their children's learning at home so that they make the best possible progress.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities both inside and outside and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the playgroup.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Jacqui Oliver

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The committee, the manager and staff demonstrate a very good understanding of how to safeguard children. All staff have completed relevant training and are confident in the steps they would take to share concerns about a child. There are robust procedures when recruiting and vetting staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Staff work particularly well together and the organisation of the playgroup is good. They are reflective and continually evaluate the provision they offer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

The manager and staff have worked at the playgroup for several years and offer stability for parents and children. They are well qualified which has a positive impact on children's learning. Staff observe children and plan for their next steps in learning. They introduce numbers and counting with children, helping to support their mathematical development. Children's early literacy skills are encouraged as staff use daily routines to encourage them to recognise their name. There are many opportunities for children to learn about the natural world. For example, they enjoy looking for insects and smelling the different herbs in the sensory garden.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children and their families are warmly welcomed by the manager and staff. There is a very good key-person system in place. This enables children to build close relationships with familiar and trusted adults, supporting their emotional well-being. Children are encouraged to make choices and develop their independence effectively. They take responsibility for small tasks, such as pouring their drinks and serving their food at snack time. Staff give a high priority to ensuring children learn about the importance of safe and healthy lifestyles. Children eat nutritious snacks, have regular exercise and follow good hygiene routines. Children take part in a variety of events and celebrations, giving them a wider understanding of the world. For example, they enjoy wearing their hats in their Easter parade.

Outcomes for children are good

Children of all abilities achieve well and enjoy their time at the playgroup. Staff effectively promote the prime areas of learning, ensuring there is a solid foundation for children's future learning. Children are becoming confident, independent learners. Staff continually praise and encourage the children, helping them to feel valued and respected. They learn to be part of a group, understand rules and show respect for the feelings and choices of others. They are prepared well emotionally and gain the skills they need for future learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY295043
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1087949
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	St Michaels Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519033
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2014
Telephone number	0781611 8130

St Michaels Playgroup was registered again in 2004. The playgroup employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds a recognised qualification at level 4. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until midday. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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